

New Deal - Great Depression Timeline

1932

June 27-July 2

Democratic National Convention, Chicago, Illinois Roosevelt flies to Chicago from Albany to deliver acceptance speech in person (the first time this is done) in which he declares, "I pledge you, I pledge myself, a new deal for the American people."

November 8

FDR and the Democrats **win the election** by a landslide. Democrats take control of both houses of Congress.

1933

March 4

FDR inaugurated the 32nd president of the U.S. "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

March 5

FDR issues a proclamation declaring a four-day "bank holiday" throughout the nation effective March 6. All banking transactions stop and embargo on exportation of gold, silver, and currency. Summons Congress to special session for March 9.

March 9-June 16

"Hundred Days" session FDR gets a willing Congress to enact many of the New Deal programs. This first day Congress passes the Emergency Banking Act, giving FDR broad powers over banks and foreign exchange. Bank holiday ends March 10--banks can reopen when they prove that they are solvent. Within three days, 1000 banks will reopen and national confidence picks up.

March 12

FDR gives first "fireside chat".

March 31

Congress passes the **Reforestation Relief Act**, establishing the **Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC)**; it provides work immediately for 250,000 young men (18-25) in reforestation, road construction and developing national parks. Work camps begin to spring up. By the time it eases in 1941, two million people have worked on its projects.

April 19

FDR takes the nation off of the gold standard.

May 12

Congress passes the **Federal Emergency Relief Act**, which authorizes immediate grants to states for relief projects. Unemployment has reached 14 million-over one quarter of the nation's work force.

Roosevelt signs the **Agricultural Adjustment Act** to provide immediate relief to farmers by setting prices for agricultural products and paying subsidies to farmers for curtailing production of certain crops that were in surplus.

May 18

Congress establishes the **Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)** to construct dams and power plants along the Tennessee Valley; electricity will go to residents, many of whom lacked it previously, and fertilizer will be sold.

May 27

Congress passes the **Federal Securities Act** to monitor and regulate stocks and bonds.

June 6

Congress passes the **National Employment System Act**.

June 13

Congress passes the **Home Owners Refinancing Act** to provide mortgage money and other aid to homeowners. It will go out of business in June 1936 after providing loans for some one million mortgages.

June 16

The final day of the "Hundred Days" session. Congress passes the National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) establishing the **Public Works Administration (PWA)** and the **National Recovery Administration (NRA)**.

The PWA is authorized to supervise the construction of roads, public buildings and other projects while providing employment. Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes is tapped to head the PWA.

The NRA's goal is to stimulate competition and benefit producers and consumers by implementing various codes to establish fair trade. Compliance was to be voluntary; those who cooperate received the blue eagle "seal of approval." NRA is to be directed by General Hugh Johnson. It will be declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in May 1935.

Congress also passes the **Farm Credit Act** and the **Banking Act of 1933** (which establishes FDIC).

August 5

FDR establishes by executive order, the **National Labor Board** to enforce the right of collective bargaining.

November 8

FDR establishes by executive order the **Civil Works Administration (CWA)** to provide work for some four million unemployed over the winter months. It ceases operation in March 1934.

December 5

The **21st Amendment** goes into effect, repealing the 18th Amendment and ending prohibition.

1934

January 4

In his annual message to Congress, FDR asks for ten and a half billion dollars to advance recovery programs over the next 18 months.

January 30

Congress passes the **Gold Reserve Act** in order to give government control over fluctuations in the value of the dollar.

January 31

Roosevelt signs the **Farm Mortgage Refinancing Act** to assist farmers in refinancing their mortgages.

February 2

Roosevelt establishes by executive order the **Import-Export Bank** of Washington to encourage commerce between the U.S. and foreign nations.

February 15

Congress passes the **Civil Works Emergency Relief Administration** to run new programs.

February 23

Congress passes the **Crop Loan Act**, which continues the **Farm Credit Administration**, providing loans to farmers based on crop production and harvesting.

April 7

Congress passes the **Jones-Connally Farm Relief Act** to extend the number of agricultural products to be controlled by the AAA.

April 21

Congress passes the **Cotton Control Act**, imposing quotas limiting the cotton production of various areas and individuals.

May 9

Jones-Costigan Act authorizes controls on both cane and beet sugar as well as sugar imports.

June 6

Roosevelt passes the **Securities Exchange Act**, establishing the SEC to regulate security transactions. First chairman is Joseph Kennedy.

June 7

Congress passes **Corporate Bankruptcy Act**, allowing a corporation facing bankruptcy to reorganize if 2/3 of its creditors agree.

June 12

Farm Mortgage Foreclosure Act allowing loans to farmers to recover property lost to foreclosure.

June 19

Silver Purchase Act Establishes **National Labor Relations Board** to replace the NLB.

June 28

National Housing Act establishing the **Federal Housing Administration (FHA)** to insure loans for construction, renovation or repairs of homes.

Taylor Grazing Act setting aside some 8 million acres of public land for grazing.

Tobacco Control Act sets mandatory quotas limiting production.

Federal Farm Bankruptcy Act placing a moratorium on farm mortgage foreclosures.

1935

January 4

Roosevelt delivers annual message to Congress effectively beginning phase two of the New Deal. Proposes long-term goals of providing for social security for aged, ill and unemployed, better housing and tax reform.

April 8

Emergency Relief Appropriation Act authorizing almost five billion for immediate relief and increased employment on "useful projects," one of which is the **Works Progress Administration (WPA)**.

May 1

FDR establishes the **Resettlement Administration (RA)** to help farm families relocate and furnish them with loans and new projects.

May 6

The WPA begins. It will build thousands of roads, public buildings, parks and bridges and provide employment for artists, musicians, actors and writers.

May 11

FDR establishes the **Rural Electrification Administration** to help bring electricity to areas previously where it was previously unavailable.

May 27

Supreme Court rules unanimously in **Schechter Poultry Corp. v. United States** that the NIRA of 1933 was unconstitutional. A major setback to the New Deal, it is the first of many Supreme Court decisions that will go against FDR and lead to his court-packing proposal of 1937.

July 5

FDR signs the **National Labor Relations Act (Wagner-Connery)**. Upheld as constitutional by Supreme Court in March 1937.

August 14

FDR signs the **Social Security Act** guaranteeing pensions to those retiring at 65 with contributions from both employees and employers. Also provides financial aid to dependent children and blind people and establishes a system of unemployment insurance.

August 23

Congress passes the **Banking Act of 1935** that revises the operation of the Federal Reserve System, generally making banks more responsible and responsive to the public.

August 26

FDR signs the **Public Utilities Act** giving federal agencies new powers of regulating the gas and electric companies.

August 30

Congress passes the **Revenue Act**, increasing taxes on inheritances, gifts and higher income individuals.

1936

January 6

In **U.S. v. Butler** Supreme Court rules 6-3 that the **Agricultural Adjustment Act** is unconstitutional on the grounds that the act did not levy a tax but tried to control production, exceeding government responsibilities.

November 3

Roosevelt defeats Alfred M. Landon in a presidential landslide victory (electoral votes: 523-8 Popular vote margin: Over 11 million). Democrats hold onto House and Senate.

1937

January 20

FDR inaugurated to second term. The passage of the 20th Amendment in 1933 changed the inauguration date to January from March. *"I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished."*

February 5

Growing increasingly frustrated with a Supreme Court composed of nine men, all over 60 and generally conservative, that he felt was "thwarting the will of the nation" and "emboldened by the extent of his victory at the polls," FDR informs his cabinet at a special meeting that he will be sending a message to Congress that afternoon proposing the reorganization of the federal judiciary system.

The plan is ostensibly designed to "improve the efficiency of the entire system" by adding judges to all levels of the federal courts and adopting procedures to expedite the appeals process. The intent of the plan is obvious: by adding a judge to the Supreme Court for every justice who refuses to retire after the

age of 70, FDR could appoint enough justices to uphold his New Deal programs. FDR is criticized for wanting to "pack the court" and attacking the independence of the judiciary and subvert the Constitution. Many of Roosevelt's longtime supporters will desert him on this controversial proposal and the opposition he receives to this proposal begins to sour the nation on the New Deal which will essentially come to an end by the summer of 1937.

March 1

Congress passes the **Supreme Court Retirement Act**, which simply permits Supreme Court Justices to retire at 70 with full pay.

April 12

In a series of decisions the **Supreme Court rules (5-4) that the National Labor Relations Act is constitutional** and takes some of the steam out of Roosevelt's move to reorganize the court.

May 24

The Supreme Court rules that the **Social Security Act is constitutional**, essentially removing any impetus Roosevelt had to change the composition of the court.

August 26

President Roosevelt signs the **Judicial Procedure Reform Act**, a compromise on his original reorganization plan.

1938-39 at a glance

June

FDR signs **Emergency Relief Appropriations Act**, an extension of his previous efforts to deal with recession.

Congress passes the **Chandler Act**, as an amendment to the Federal Bankruptcy Act of 1898, and sets forth procedures for settling debt through liquidation.

January 4

In his annual State of the Union address to Congress, President Roosevelt **shifts his emphasis from domestic issues** to the tense international scene. About 1/6 of his \$9 billion budget request will go to defense.